



Request for Proposals: Net Zero Grid Distribution  
Planning Lab Technical Support and Demonstration  
Vendors

RFP FY2020-NZG-01

Date of Issue: March 29, 2021

Proposals Due: June 9, 2021 by 11:59 PM EST

Total Funding Available: \$850,000

All proposals must be submitted to: [ahorowitz@masscec.com](mailto:ahorowitz@masscec.com)

## I. SUMMARY

Through this Request for Proposals (“RFP”), the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (“MassCEC”) seeks applications from consultants or professionals with expertise in power systems engineering, integrated systems planning with distributed energy resource (“DERs”), load forecasting and scenario analysis, and grid modernization benefit-cost analysis to assist the Commonwealth in lowering barriers to accomplishing the Clean Energy and Climate Plan for 2030 (“CECP”)<sup>1</sup> on its road to Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions.

MassCEC anticipates selecting awardees under two categories of work (“Scopes”):

- 1) Preparatory analysis to reach Net Zero emissions on the distribution system

Under this scope, an applicant or technical consultant (“Applicant”) will perform the following two tasks:

- a) Baseline assessment of distribution system barriers and opportunities
- b) Load forecasting based on decarbonization scenarios

- 2) Demonstration of novel distribution system planning protocols, tools, and/or enabling technologies

Under this scope, Applicant(s) will demonstrate advanced planning tools, methodologies, and/or enabling technologies that will further grid decarbonization goals in a cost-effective manner.

MassCEC anticipates selecting multiple Applicants or Applicant Teams under this RFP. Applicants are not required to submit Proposals addressing both Scopes, although such Proposals are encouraged.

## II. ABOUT MASSCEC

MassCEC is a publicly-funded agency dedicated to accelerating the success of clean energy technologies, companies and projects in the Commonwealth—while creating high-quality jobs and long-term economic growth for the people of Massachusetts. Since it began operating in 2009, MassCEC has helped clean energy companies grow, supported municipal clean energy projects and invested in residential and commercial renewable energy installations, creating a robust marketplace for innovative clean technology companies and service providers.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-clean-energy-and-climate-plan-for-2030>

### III. PROGRAM GOALS AND DESCRIPTION

The Program aims to demonstrate a distribution planning process that considers the Commonwealth's path to Net Zero by 2050 on a holistic basis. As part of the recently-released 2050 Decarbonization Roadmap,<sup>2</sup> the Energy Pathways to Deep Decarbonization report ("[DDP](#)") outlines several potential paths to Net Zero emissions by 2050. Each one of these paths requires transformational shifts in the electricity sector. Significant, electrification-driven growth in customer load and broad deployment of distributed energy resources are key strategies in all paths to decarbonization.

The 2030 Clean Energy and Climate Plan ("[CECP](#)"), based on the findings of the DDP, identifies [critical near-term steps and goals](#) that will put Massachusetts on the path to Net Zero. Within the next 10 years, Massachusetts must add at least another 2 GW of solar PV resources to the electric grid, deploy electric space heating in at least 1 million homes, and add at least 750,000 electric vehicles on the road.<sup>3</sup>

MassCEC anticipates that significant distribution system investment will be required to meet the objectives stated in the CECP of developing a flexible, responsive, and modernized electricity grid that can enable high levels of DER integration and end-use electrification. MassCEC aims for this solicitation to assist in exploring the level and types of investments needed and how to pursue distribution network upgrades in the most cost-effective manner. In particular, MassCEC seeks to understand the potential for novel approaches to distribution system planning to contribute to cost minimization in constructing a Net Zero-ready grid.

At present, the process of interconnecting new DERs in the Commonwealth has become a barrier to rapid additions of new DERs. Electric distribution companies ("EDCs") currently conduct numerous individual interconnection studies for DER additions, prompted by customer applications. This results in many separate system modification projects that may not optimize for cost and efficiency. Uncertainty surrounding the planning process itself and the upgrade costs that result have already presented significant challenges to DER deployment on the distribution system, at a time when the Commonwealth's CECP goals call for significant additions of both DERs and electrification load. Notably, policy-driven electrification is not currently an input to interconnection studies.

In recognition of current interconnection challenges and planning challenges, the DPU has engaged EDCs and DER stakeholders through open investigations on these topics. Opened in May of 2019, DPU [Docket #19-55](#) aims to review current distributed generation interconnection procedures and revise tariffs and standards with stakeholder consensus. A meaningful and valuable outcome of the proceedings has been increased transparency on interconnection study processes. In October of 2020, the DPU opened [Docket #20-75](#) to investigate whether to require the EDCs to proactively plan for DER additions and how the costs of system upgrades to accommodate additional DERs may be allocated in the future. While this docket may result in the creation of a planning requirement and provide guidelines for such a requirement, the docket will not provide an opportunity to test different planning methodologies or to provide demonstrable quantification of the savings to ratepayers achievable using different tools and approaches.

The DPU's straw proposal for a planning requirement in Docket #20-75 focuses primarily on DER additions. However, as indicated above, the Commonwealth also anticipates significant load growth due to electrification of heating and vehicles. Through this Program, MassCEC intends to build on the work of

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/ma-decarbonization-roadmap>

<sup>3</sup> According to the [Clean Energy and Climate Plan for 2030](#), released Dec. 30, 2020, on pages 19, 29, and 37.

DPU in alignment with the CECP by increasing distribution grid visibility for all stakeholders and by demonstrating novel planning methodologies and related tools. MassCEC also intends for this Program to inform future grid modernization plan proposals by the EDCs so that these approaches can be scaled. MassCEC’s goal is to explore solutions that will minimize the risk of planning and identification of needed upgrades impeding the uptake of electrification technologies and further slowing the progress of DER additions.

This Program will illuminate current barriers in updating the distribution grid, demonstrate dynamic and data-driven planning approaches, and demonstrate value in enabling tools such as advanced monitoring and control technologies. The Program aims to demonstrate processes by which distribution system upgrades can be identified which meet existing needs as well as optimizing the distribution grid for the Commonwealth’s CECP targets. The overall goals of the Program are:

1. To identify and assess key barriers and cost drivers in updating the distribution grid to support electrification and the addition of DERs;
2. To demonstrate new planning approaches, enabled by advanced tools, that can support significant electrification, demand-side management programming, and DER integration in the most cost-effective manner; and
3. To identify approaches that can be scaled by EDCs in the future, technologies can enable these modernized approaches, and regulatory paths to implementation of those approaches.

#### IV. ELIGIBILITY

An applicant or applicant team (each an “Applicant”) may consist of one or more individuals, sole proprietors, professional consultants, institutions or companies with multiple employees. MassCEC encourages potential applicants to form a team (“Applicant Team”), if necessary, to provide all the requisite experience required for a given Program Scope. Proposals must be submitted by a single lead Applicant and clearly identify relevant Applicant team sub-vendor(s) with whom to jointly respond to this RFP and the respective roles and experience.

MassCEC anticipates selecting one Applicant Team under Scope 1 of this RFP. Under Scope 2, MassCEC anticipates selecting as many Applicant Teams as budget allows, given that the proposed provides a clear and compelling demonstration of ratepayer benefits and alignment with Massachusetts climate goals.

#### V. ESTIMATED TIMELINE

<b>RFP Released</b>	March 29, 2021
<b>Questions Due</b>	April 30, 2021
<b>Responses to Questions Posted</b>	May 7, 2021
<b>Applications Due*</b>	June 9, 2021 by 11:59 PM EST
<b>Selection Announcement</b>	July 2021

\*Late or incomplete submissions will not be considered.

## VI. SCOPE OF WORK

The Program consists of two primary categories of work in the context of a Net Zero Grid:

1. Preparatory analysis to reach Net Zero emissions on the distribution system

Under this scope, Applicant(s) will complete the following two tasks:

- a) Baseline assessment of distribution system barriers and opportunities; and
- b) Load forecasting based on decarbonization scenarios.

2. Demonstration of novel distribution system planning protocols and tools

Under this scope, Applicant(s) will demonstrate advanced planning tools, methodologies, and/or enabling technologies that will further grid decarbonization goals in a cost-effective manner. MassCEC seeks demonstrations of innovative planning approaches that use load forecasts developed under Scope 1B and result in distribution system upgrade plans for real circuits in EDC territory. MassCEC also seeks demonstrations of advanced monitoring and control technologies and other relevant technologies that can increase the operational flexibility of the distribution system and significantly reduce cost, including potentially reduction in capital investments.

MassCEC anticipates selecting multiple Applicants or Applicant Teams under this RFP. Applicants are not required to submit Proposals addressing both Scopes, although such Proposals are encouraged.

MassCEC is particularly interested in projects that will include collaboration with EDC partners. The anticipated scope of EDC collaboration can be found in Attachments C and D.

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### 1. PREPARATORY ANALYSIS TO REACH NET ZERO EMISSIONS

Under this Scope, an Applicant or Applicant Team will complete two tasks. The deliverables under these tasks will likely be informed by anticipated collaboration with the EDCs, outlined in Attachments C and D. The deliverables under these tasks may inform the planning demonstrations under Scope 2.

#### *1A. Baseline assessment of distribution system barriers and opportunities*

The current planning approach to DER integration in the distribution system has resulted in a lack of visibility on system constraints and opportunities. An individualized, responsive review process by the EDCs has resulted in little shared understanding of system conditions between the EDCs, policymakers, market participants, customers, and other stakeholders. MassCEC recognizes that these conditions may vary significantly across the Commonwealth due to historical differences in the amount and types of customer load (residential versus commercial/industrial; seasonal versus year-round), DER development patterns, and other effects. In characterizing system condition, it is essential to identify these localized constraints, how they currently drive upgrade costs, and how they may be impacted by future DER- or electrification-related conditions. Through increasing transparency on these local conditions, stakeholders can begin to optimally integrate DER and pursue cost-efficient system upgrades.

Tools such as EDC hosting capacity maps, as required by DPU #19-55, are starting to improve the ability of stakeholders to optimally site DERs. MassCEC intends to build on these tools and provide a platform for a shared understanding of distribution system conditions between EDCs and other stakeholders.

Under Scope 1A, the Applicant or Applicant Team is expected to engage in substantive conversations with EDC staff to illuminate existing physical limitations on the distribution system associated with DER integration and electrification. As part of this work, the selected Applicant will be expected to enter into a Non-Disclosure Agreement with one or more EDCs operating in the Commonwealth.

The primary deliverable of this scope will be a brief PowerPoint presentation and/or white paper describing the DER- and electrification-related conditions that prompt distribution system capital upgrades and the potential cost drivers of such upgrades across the Commonwealth. The goals under this task are to:

1. Highlight both near-term and long-term distribution system constraints within the framework of the 2030 CECP goals;
2. Identify current upgrade cost drivers (including the potential for collaborating with EDC stakeholders on an estimation of “base case” costs associated with the targets included in the CECP) and potential opportunities for cost-savings that can be pursued by the EDCs; and
3. Synthesize this information and discuss best practices and prospects for overcoming barriers for a lay audience.

As consensus-building and convening work is one of the main roles of MassCEC, it is central to MassCEC’s intent that the outcome of this task be accessible to non-technical audiences. Applicants should ensure to specify how this information might be best presented to both EDCs and a lay audience. For example, Applicants should address the following in conceptual terms:

- How will opportunities for cost savings be identified and justified?
- What types of potential upgrade and investment opportunities might be highlighted?
- How might current cost drivers be identified and categorized?
- What types of background information are necessary to present to lay audiences and why?
- How should the assessment address geographical differences in the distribution system (e.g., what scale should be assessed)?

### *1B. Load forecasting based on decarbonization scenarios*

Within the next 10 years, the electricity sector must undergo a transformation shift in order to meet Commonwealth climate goals. Regardless of pathway, the electrification of end-use technologies and DER growth will present a major shift in the electric consumption behavior of customers. With the addition of clean heating and cooling load, EV load, and other electrification technologies, the DDP estimates that most decarbonization pathways will result in a doubling of end-use electricity demand by 2050.<sup>4</sup> The modeling of each of these loads as well as the interplay with DER growth is complex and not currently well understood. Although the DDP demonstrates broadly how electric load will shift and snapshots of “typical day” loads, the modeling is not sufficiently detailed to be used in a planning process. Highly resolved data, both temporally and spatially, is necessary in order to specify distribution system upgrades. Further, the modeling used to produce such data should be flexible and include the development of multiple scenarios to address uncertainty with respect to what future loads will look like.

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<sup>4</sup> Energy Pathways for Deep Decarbonization Report, released December 2020, on page 53.

Under Scope 1B, the Applicant will use key assumptions in one to three scenarios from the DDP to develop detailed load forecasts at the circuit or feeder level for a subset of the Massachusetts' distribution system. MassCEC expects that the exercise will largely comprise translating current-day load data and Commonwealth-scale load forecasts from the DDP near-term modeling and translating this information into detailed load shapes for three components of consumption: non-controllable or "native" load, flexible building loads (especially related to clean heating and cooling), and flexible EV load. The Technical Consultant will demonstrate how varying levels of electrification, load flexibility, and DER penetration influence load forecasts and produce usable forecasts for analytical purposes.

The goals under this task are to:

1. Translate findings of the Commonwealth Pathways report into highly resolved data that can be used in a planning process;
2. Demonstrate how factors unexplored in the Pathways report influence data (e.g., controllable load); and
3. Identify how this approach may be scaled and used by EDCs (or the data gaps and/or technical or regulatory barriers currently in place).

In their proposals, Applicants should explicitly identify:

- What baseline datasets will be necessary, how they plan to gather the necessary data, and what key assumptions for inputs will be used modeling;
- Which decarbonization scenario(s) outlined in the Pathways study should be modeled; What are the key parameters/assumptions in each scenario that should be explored in the context of electrification (e.g., customer technology adoption, energy efficiency, load flexibility); What are the key parameters/assumptions in each scenario that should be explored in the context of DER integration? (e.g., customer technology adoption, locational differences)

Applicants should outline proposed forecasting methodologies and demonstrate how these methods provide a robust understanding of the range of future scenarios. Applicants should characterize the expected load forecasts and speak to how these could be used in forward-looking distribution planning efforts. Applicants should also identify how these methods can be flexible to realize decarbonization outcomes and how they can be enabled by advanced monitoring and control technologies. For example:

- What type of modeling (e.g., probabilistic/stochastic) is being proposed and why is it best suited for this purpose?
- How will the model account for interactions between decarbonization strategies (e.g., load growth and DER integration)?
- How could advanced monitoring and control technologies inform the load forecasting methodology and how would this be demonstrated?
- What types of technology could enable real-time forecasting on the distribution system and how could value be demonstrated for these technologies?
- How should load be broken down into different components?
- How will methods differ in forecasting these components (e.g., EV load vs. clean heating and cooling load)?
- What level of granularity in load profile is necessary temporally for distribution system planning (e.g., hourly or sub-hourly forecasts)?
- What level of granularity in load profile is necessary geographically for distribution system planning (e.g., circuit level or facility level)?

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## 2. DEMONSTRATION OF ADVANCED PLANNING METHODOLOGIES

Traditional distribution grid planning processes are relatively narrow in scope, both in variables or inputs considered and the range of system upgrades that result. To ready the distribution grid to reach the Commonwealth's ambitious climate goals, a range of future scenarios with varying levels of DER deployment, flexible load, and electrification technologies must be considered as inputs. Further, the types of upgrades contemplated must be expanded in order to find the least cost and least risk solutions. Enabling technologies that will be necessary in both increasing operational flexibility and visibility of the grid should be identified and valued accordingly. Although there are emerging elements of innovative planning processes, they have had limited applications thus far. For example, the implementation of non-wires alternatives (NWA) to traditional distribution investments have historically been specific and reactive projects, rather than integrated into a holistic upgrade plan. Due to their individualized nature, NWA analyses have proved difficult to scale nor have they contemplated future changes in load growth or shape due to electrification or customer-sited technology. Planning approaches and principles that are systemic, proactive, and replicable are essential in transitioning to a Net Zero-ready and cost-effective grid. In order to enable EDCs to scale these approaches widely across their territories, MassCEC intends for work under this Scope to build on and inform relevant DPU proceedings and investigations.

Under this scope, an Applicant will demonstrate advanced planning tools, methodologies, and/or enabling technologies that will further grid decarbonization goals in a cost-effective manner. MassCEC seeks demonstrations of innovative planning approaches that use load forecasts developed under Scope 1B and result in distribution system upgrade plans for real circuits in EDC territory. MassCEC also seeks demonstrations of advanced monitoring and control technologies that can increase the operational flexibility of the distribution system and significantly reduce cost, including potentially reduction in capital investments.

The goals of this Scope are to:

1. Demonstrate advanced planning approaches that result in a cost-effective grid compatible with a net zero future;
2. Compare outcomes with traditional planning approaches; and
3. Identify both near-term and long-term opportunities for EDCs to use and scale these approaches (and identify any technical or regulatory barriers currently in place).

Eligible demonstrations may concern, but will not be limited to:

- Potential ratepayer benefits associated with proactive planning approaches (i.e., proactive investment to prepare for DERs and/or electrification) as compared to status quo approaches;
- Interactions between the distribution and transmission systems (e.g., backflow onto the transmission network during low load conditions), including enabling transient analysis in areas with high DG penetration or saturation;
- Advanced inverter modeling or model validation (e.g., demonstration for Volt/VAR control or other reactive power functions, beyond the investments approved in the EDCs' first Grid Modernization Plans<sup>5</sup>);

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<sup>5</sup> As approved in DPU #[15-120](#), DPU #[15-121](#), and DPU #[151-122](#)



- Use of advanced metering infrastructure (“AMI”) or customer data in distribution system control and automation;
- Temporal alignment of DER additions and additions of electrification load, including through customer-facing incentive programs and rate schedules;
- Use of advanced traditional distribution planning tools (e.g., time-series power flow analysis with DERs) to provide ratepayer benefits;
- Advanced optimization for DERs with storage systems, including value-stacking approaches that incorporate full or partial operational control by an EDC; and
- Implementation projects of either distribution system assets or advanced monitoring and control technologies (software and/or hardware).

All proposed demonstrations must include a description of:

- Ratepayer benefits (how benefits will accrue, be demonstrated, and be measured);
- Near-term and long-term opportunities for EDCs to use and scale these approaches or tools;
- Identification of any technical or regulatory barriers currently in place for a path to scale;
- How proposals and expected outcomes can inform/be informed by current DPU proceedings, with a focus on DPU Docket #20-75;
- Discussion of proposed stakeholder process in alignment with existing DPU structures in Dockets #19-55 and #20-75; and
- How the proposed approach can be flexible to process improvements.

MassCEC is particularly interested in demonstrations that actively collaborate with one or more EDCs and may be directly relevant to either ongoing proceedings (including DPU #20-75) or forthcoming filings related to grid modernization. The anticipated scope of EDC collaboration can be found in the Attachments C and D. Applicants should clearly describe any interactions they have had with Commonwealth EDCs in their proposals.

## VII. HOW TO APPLY

To respond to this Request for Proposals, submit a completed Proposal, not including recommendation letters. The submission must be in electronic form (one PDF file), including all relevant attachments, submitted via email to [ahorowitz@masscec.com](mailto:ahorowitz@masscec.com). “Net Zero Grid Distribution Planning Lab” must appear in the e-mail subject line.

Submission packages must include the following:

1. Cover Page
2. Applicant’s Signature and Acceptance Form (Attachment A)
3. Proposal (see outline of Proposal Requirements below)
4. Team Member Resumes (as an appendix)
5. Supplemental Materials (as optional appendices)

No additional materials should be submitted. Any additional materials will not be considered in the evaluation.

Under no circumstances will MassCEC accept responses past the deadline. MassCEC, at its sole discretion, will determine whether an application is complete.

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## PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Proposals must contain the following sections. Do not exceed the specified page limits.

**Executive Summary (1 page):** Applicants should provide a summary of their organization, qualifications, their technical experience relevant to the Program and their proposed approach for working with MassCEC and the EDCs.

**Statement of Qualifications (maximum 3 pages):** All responses must include a statement of qualifications, experience, and description of the Applicant, including:

- A brief description of organization(s) involved in the proposing team, including major subcontractors. Include date founded, history, size, project portfolio and location.
- Include an explanation of why the proposed organization or team is the best qualified to perform the work under the Program from a technical and business perspective. Identify other organizational qualifications relevant to the proposed work. Include examples of related past work, particularly related to advanced distribution system engineering and design and/or integrated resource planning and the current status of those projects. Responses may include appendices with relevant supplemental material (see below).
- Describe the team's ability to work with key stakeholders such as EDCs in alignment with MassCEC's Program goals. Please include material on previous relevant work with EDCs in appendices.
- Identify key individuals who will be involved in the tasks. Provide one- to two-paragraph summaries of relevant technical and business expertise of these individuals. Submit resumes (as appendices) of all key applicant team members. Resumes should include education and experience that are relevant to the proposed work.
- If applicable, list MassCEC and other state or federal contracts awarded to the Applicant and/or any subcontractors in the past five years.

**Workplan Narrative (maximum 5 pages per primary scope):** The Workplan describes work activities, deliverables and timeline associated with completing Scope 1, Scope 2, or both provided in Section VI. The Workplan shall describe each step or procedure required to accomplish each task, including who will perform it, how it will be performed and its intended result. Provide a project plan for working collaboratively with relevant stakeholders (e.g., gathering necessary data, sharing findings and outcomes) and enlisting other sources of technical, financial, or regulatory expertise. Identify which components of the Workplan will require coordination with the Project Team. The Workplan Narrative should explicitly address how the Applicant's proposed approach makes sense given the existing regulatory context in Massachusetts and the grid-facing investments approved by the DPU in Dockets #15-120/121/122. To the greatest extent practicable, Applicants should also comment on the relevance of their approach to work undertaken by the Commonwealth's EDCs as part of their operations in neighboring jurisdictions.

Responses under Scope 2 should include a description of the relevant technology, tool, and/or methodology including its principle of operation, form of the product, and current state of development. Responses should also include a discussion of the context of the technology, including a description of the status quo and how it is both innovative and viable for the use case.

**Project Schedule (1 page):** All responses must include an estimated project schedule which lays out all project milestones and deliverables and length or date of completion. Identify any constraints or specific requirements for work scheduling. Propose a progress reporting schedule.

**Budget and Rate Sheet (maximum 2 pages):** Responses must include a detailed budget, including information on rates of all team members working on the project.<sup>6</sup> Where Applicants anticipate using outside expertise for a task, the Applicant should include estimated rates. Budgets should be broken out by task and service provided, and must be proposed on a per-Scope basis.

**References (1 page):** All responses must include references from at least three (3) clients of the Applicant, and preferably clients who have utilized the Applicant on matters related to the proposed technical services. These references must include a contact person, a full address, an email address, and a phone number. Current and former MassCEC staff may be included as supplementary references for previous work conducted on behalf of MassCEC, but do not count toward the three-reference requirement.

**Supplemental Material (optional appendices):** Responses may include relevant case studies, previous white papers, and journal publications.

## VIII. SELECTION CRITERIA

MassCEC is seeking the most comprehensive Proposal from qualified entities to fulfil the roles described above. All Proposals must be responsive to the relevant scope of services and proposal requirements outlined in this RFP.

Applicant Proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria:

Criterion	Definition
<b>Range of Services to be Provided</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Does the Applicant plan to provide services commensurate with the services requested by MassCEC?</li> <li>2. Does the Applicant demonstrate an understanding of the concepts and motivators underlying the Program?</li> <li>3. Does the Applicant demonstrate an ability and interest in provision of the scope?</li> <li>4. Has the Applicant clearly outlined a proposed approach for working with MassCEC and other key stakeholders?</li> <li>5. If the Applicant has suggested changes to the primary Scopes (additions, alterations or deletions), are those changes aligned with the overall goals of the Program?</li> </ol>
<b>Qualifications</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is the quality of the Applicant’s performance on similar past consulting assignments or their achievements related to proposed work? How were their efforts evaluated?</li> <li>2. What is the Applicant’s experience in distribution systems engineering, utility cost-benefit analysis, and/or integrated resource planning Do all individuals proposed as key team members have relevant technical expertise and experience working with EDCs?</li> <li>3. What is the Applicant’s plan for acquiring technical knowledge that it may not have in-house?</li> <li>4. Has the Applicant demonstrated successful performance under previous MassCEC, state, or federal contracts?</li> </ol>

<sup>6</sup> Please note that contractor rates are not considered confidential in the case of a public records request. Please see Section VI for additional information on the Massachusetts Public Records law.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Has the Applicant provided strong references and recommendations?</li> <li>6. Does the Applicant demonstrate strong communication and interpersonal skills which would enable the Applicant to communicate Program goals, deadlines and expectations with the MassCEC team?</li> </ol>
<b>Familiarity with Commonwealth Context</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Has the Applicant demonstrated familiarity with the relevant regulatory context in Massachusetts, including DPU Dockets #15-120/121/122, #20-69, and #20-75?</li> <li>2. Has the Applicant demonstrated familiarity with the existing capabilities and plans filed by the Commonwealth’s EDCs in Massachusetts and neighboring jurisdictions?<sup>7</sup></li> </ol>
<b>Project Workplan</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Does the proposed Workplan meet the objectives of the primary scopes outlined in Section VI?</li> <li>2. Will the proposed Workplan fulfil the goals of each task?</li> <li>3. Is the proposed Workplan clear and specific regarding how tasks will be carried out and by whom?</li> <li>4. Are any changes to the primary Scope(s) adequately justified in the Project Workplan?</li> <li>5. Is the proposed Schedule both reasonable and realistic?</li> </ol>
<b>Overall Quality of Proposal</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Has the Applicant presented their qualifications clearly, completely and in adherence to the Proposal format?</li> <li>2. Has the Applicant demonstrated sufficient time resources and flexibility to participate in the Program?</li> </ol>
<b>Value Demonstration</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Is the Applicant’s Proposal cost-competitive and within the budget requirements?</li> <li>2. Are the services reflected in the Applicant’s quote commensurate with the proposed budget?</li> <li>3. Does the range of services proposed align with the requirements of this RFP?</li> <li>4. Comparison of range of services to other Applicants’ Proposals.</li> </ol>
<b>Potential of Proposed Demonstration (Scope 2 only)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Does the Proposal include a clear and compelling description of ratepayer benefits (how benefits will accrue, be demonstrated, and be measured)?</li> <li>2. Does the Proposal outline near-term and long-term opportunities for EDCs to use and scale these approaches or tools?</li> <li>3. Is the proposed technology, tool, and/or methodology innovative and viable?</li> </ol>

**IX. BUDGET**

An Applicant must provide an anticipated budget with the application. Budget evaluation will be a factor in the selection criteria. Please note that the consultant will be paid on a milestone basis based on a deliverable schedule.

MassCEC anticipates fully funding Scope 1 through this RFP. MassCEC may consider cost share provided by Applicant Teams as a factor in evaluating proposals for Scope 2.

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<sup>7</sup> Including, for example, NWA frameworks in Rhode Island and New York including the NY REV process; Eversource’s filings on NWA approaches in [Connecticut](#) and New Hampshire.

## X. CONTACT INFORMATION FOR QUESTIONS

Please submit all questions in writing to [ahorowitz@masscec.com](mailto:ahorowitz@masscec.com) no later than April 30, 2021. "Net Zero Grid Distribution Planning Lab RFP Questions" must appear in the subject line. Responses to questions will be posted on the RFP page by May 7, 2021.

## XI. GENERAL REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS CONDITIONS

### NOTICE OF PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

As a public entity, MassCEC is subject to Massachusetts' Public Records Law, codified at Chapter 66 of the Massachusetts General Laws. Thus, any documentary material, data, or other information received by MassCEC from an applicant is a public record subject to disclosure. Applicants shall not send MassCEC any confidential or sensitive information in response to this RFP.

### DISCLAIMER & WAIVER AUTHORITY

This RFP does not commit MassCEC to award any funds, pay any costs incurred in preparing an application, or procure or contract for services or supplies. MassCEC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications received, waive minor irregularities in submittal requirements, modify the anticipated timeline, request modification of the application, negotiate with all qualified Applicants, cancel or modify the RFP in part or in its entirety, or change the application guidelines, when it is in its best interests.

This RFP has been distributed electronically using MassCEC's website. It is the responsibility of Applicants to check the website for any addenda or modifications to an RFP to which they intend to respond. MassCEC accepts no liability and will provide no accommodation to Applicants who submit an application based on an out-of-date RFP document.

### CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS

Upon MassCEC's authorization to proceed with the Proposal, MassCEC and the awarded applicant(s) will execute a contract, substantially in the form of the Sample Agreement located in Attachment B, which will set forth the respective roles and responsibilities of the parties.